United Nations A/49/PV.107

General Assembly
Forty-ninth Session

Official Records

107th plenary meeting
Thursday, 14 September 1995, 10.30 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Essy . . . . . (Côte d'Ivoire)

The meeting was called to order at 11.15 a.m.

Agenda item 112 *(continued)*

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/49/838/Add.5)

The President *(interpretation from French)*: In a letter contained in document A/49/838/Add.5, the Secretary-General informs me that, since the issuance of his communications dated 26 January, 28 February, 24 May, 21 June and 12 July 1995, Guinea-Bissau and Mauritania have made the necessary payments to reduce their arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of this information?

It was so decided.

Floods and storms in Antigua and Barbuda, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Morocco and Pakistan

The President *(interpretation from French)*: I wish, on behalf of all the members of the Assembly, to extend our sympathy to the Governments and the peoples of Antigua and Barbuda, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Morocco and Pakistan for the tragic loss of human life and extensive material damage that have resulted from the recent floods and hurricanes in those countries.

May I also express the hope that the international community will show its solidarity and respond promptly and generously to any request for assistance.

Agenda item 10 *(continued)*

Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization

Strengthening of the United Nations system

Draft resolution (A/49/L.68)

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/49/961)

The President *(interpretation from French)*: The Assembly will first consider draft resolution (A/49/L.68), entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations system", which I have the honour to introduce.

The consensus text before the General Assembly this morning is the result of intensive consultations held on my behalf by His Excellency Mr. Sreenivasan of India. I wish to reiterate my special gratitude to him and to express my satisfaction at the spirit of cooperation that prevailed during the consultations. I believe this text reflects the importance accorded by Member States to the need to enhance the role of the United Nations in these challenging times. Before we proceed to consider the draft resolution, I should like to recall some important understandings that must be taken into account in the implementation of the resolution.

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By operative paragraph 1, the Assembly would decide to establish the Open-ended High-level Working Group, under the chairmanship of the President of the General Assembly and with two vice-chairmen to be elected by the Working Group. During the discussions, it was agreed that the Working Group would hold a meeting during the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly. By the terms of the same paragraph, the Assembly would decide that the Working Group may establish sub-groups open to the participation of all Member States.

With regard to operative paragraph 2, which describes the type of reports and studies that should be reviewed by the Working Group, there was agreement that, given the complexity and exceedingly high volume of documentation available, work to systematically gather information would have to begin as soon as possible. Thus it would be necessary for the Working Group or, as appropriate, its Bureau, to meet for organizational purposes during the period September to December. It would be specially important for the Working Group or, as appropriate, its Bureau, to provide guidance to the Secretariat before it began the task of preparing material for the Working Group. The studies and reports of commissions and institutions, some of which have made far-reaching proposals, encompass many aspects of the United Nations system in the political, economic, social and other fields. Synthesizing and classifying all these studies and reports will be a significant undertaking. It is therefore necessary to channel efforts so that the material presented responds to a work plan. As stated in operative paragraph 4, the Working Group would commence its substantive work during the fiftieth session. However, it is important to note that the bulk of the substantive work would begin in 1996, thus giving the Secretariat some time to carry out initial research and gather information to be placed before the Working Group at the earliest opportunity in 1996.

The request contained in operative paragraph 3 that the Working Group maintain regular contacts with the bureaux of the working groups mentioned in the fifth preambular paragraph is essential to avoid duplication, and is designed to ensure that the work of the other working groups can continue unimpeded. A transparent mechanism would be devised to facilitate those contacts. The Working Group should submit a report on its work before the conclusion of the fiftieth session. It would thus have to organize its work and calendar of meetings so that it can prepare and submit a report in due time, and no later than Monday, 16 September 1996, the date when the fiftieth session will come to a close.

The draft resolution, in operative paragraph 5, requests the Secretary-General to provide, within existing resources, to be supplemented by a trust fund to which voluntary contributions could be solicited, full assistance to the Working Group, including the facilities and support services necessary for it to conduct its work. The trust fund would be used for securing the services of experts to review and analyse the existing related work, and Member States are urged to contribute to this fund.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/49/L.68.

The report of the Fifth Committee on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/49/L.68 is contained in document A/49/961.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/49/L.68?

I see no objection.

Draft resolution A/49/L.68 was adopted (resolution 49/252).

Mr. Birenbaum (United States of America): The United States was pleased to join the consensus on draft resolution A/49/L.68, entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations system".

Our delegation thanks you, Mr. President, for your vision leading to today's consensus resolution. We also wish to express our gratitude to Ambassador Sreenivasan of India for his inspired leadership in bringing the work of the drafting committee to a successful conclusion.

Your initiative, Mr. President, has encouraged Member States to think beyond today's issues, to contemplate a United Nations system organized to address the challenges of the future with far greater effectiveness and efficiency and a clearer focus on its essential missions.

As President Clinton said last June at the fiftieth anniversary of the signing of the United Nations Charter, "The United Nations must become more flexible, operate more rapidly, waste less and produce more and, most importantly, inspire confidence among our Governments and peoples".

Today's consensus provides a vehicle for Member States to develop a blueprint for such a United Nations

system. The Working Group will not have to start from scratch. Fortunately, it will be able to draw upon a rich body of literature on reforming the United Nations, as well as submissions by Member States. The job of the Working Group will be to harvest the best of these ideas and incorporate them into its report to the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. In so doing, the Working Group should avoid duplicating the work of other working groups. The resolution so stipulates, and the United States is fully committed to focusing the efforts of this new Working Group on matters which are not being addressed by such bodies.

This fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations is the best possible occasion for us to undertake this work. What greater gift could we bestow upon our successors than a revitalized, strengthened and reformed United Nations system? The United States looks forward to working with all Member States in the spirit of partnership to assure that the high promise of this resolution is realized.

As President Clinton emphatically affirmed in his San Francisco address, the United States is fully committed to the United Nations system. We want to do everything in our power to help it fulfil the timeless purposes and principles of the Charter. It is in that spirit that we dedicate ourselves to joining with all delegations in working constructively to produce a blueprint for the United Nations of the twenty-first century by the end of the historic fiftieth session of the General Assembly.

The President (*interpretation from French*): I now call on the representative of Spain, who will make a statement on behalf of the European Union.

Mr. Yañez-Barnuevo (Spain) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union.

The Republic of Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Hungary, the Republic of Latvia, the Republic of Lithuania, Malta, the Republic of Poland, Romania and the Slovak Republic align themselves with the content of this statement.

The General Assembly has just adopted without a vote draft resolution A/49/L.68, which you, Mr. President, submitted with a view to consideration of the question of the strengthening of the United Nations system. The European Union wishes to express its satisfaction at this decision, which represents the successful outcome of the initiative undertaken by you, and to convey to you its appreciation for the tireless efforts that you have devoted to this issue in the past few months.

Let me also convey through you to the delegation of India the warmest appreciation of the European Union for the skilful way in which Ambassador Sreenivasan chaired the "informal informals" which successfully resulted in the text which we have adopted today.

The European Union, which attaches great importance to efforts aimed at the revitalization, strengthening and reform of the United Nations system, follows with particular attention the initiatives directed towards the achievement of this goal. In this perspective, the European Council, in the solemn Declaration adopted at its meeting held in Cannes on 26 and 27 June, called upon the United Nations and its Member States

> "to pursue and develop the reform programme under way, in order to remedy the weaknesses in some areas and to be ready to take up the challenges of the next century".

This call forcefully embodies the rationale of the constructive and active approach taken by the European Union, as well as by its Member States, in the work of the various working groups of the General Assembly already established and of our positive consideration of the reforms undertaken by the Secretariat. It will also guide the active participation of the European Union in the wide-ranging debate on the future of the Organization, for which the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations will be a welcome occasion.

With the adoption of draft resolution A/49/L.68, the Open-ended High-level Working Group which we have decided to establish becomes an integral element of the network of working groups that at present are considering the most appropriate ways to prepare our Organization for the challenges which lie ahead.

As is rightly pointed out in operative paragraph 2 of the resolution, the Working Group will specify by consensus those ideas and proposals, drawn from the thorough review of different studies and reports, that it concludes are appropriate for the purpose of revitalization, strengthening and reform of the United Nations system in fulfilment of the principles and purposes of the Charter.

This work of collation and identification will help reinforce and complement reform efforts under way in other working groups of the General Assembly without in any way duplicating or impeding that work. I refer, of course, to the Working Groups listed in the fifth preambular paragraph of the resolution: the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on An Agenda for Development, the High-level Open-ended Working Group on the Financial Situation of the United Nations, the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council, the Informal Open-ended Working Group on An Agenda for Peace and the Consultations on Prospective New Modalities for Financing Operational Activities for Development.

In this respect, I wish to underline the particular importance that the European Union attaches to the careful implementation of this fundamental feature of the new Working Group's mandate. To this end, it is essential that there be close cooperation between the Bureaus of all these Working Groups.

Moreover, the European Union wishes to reiterate that it considers particularly relevant for the work of the High-level Working Group awareness of the importance of a viable financial basis for the success and proper functioning of the United Nations.

The European Union listened attentively, Mr. President, to your statement introducing draft resolution A/49/L.68, and wishes to express its agreement with the understandings that must be taken into account in the implementation of the resolution just adopted.

The European Union wishes to pledge its constructive participation in the substantive work of the Working Group to begin during the fiftieth session of the General Assembly, and expresses its hope that Member States will engage in this exercise with a view to strengthening the United Nations system and with a firm commitment to supporting it in its action. To that end, the European Union looks forward to the early election by the Working Group of its Bureau.

The President (*interpretation from French*): I call on the representative of the Philippines, who will make a statement on behalf of the Group of 77.

Mr. Mabilangan (Philippines): On behalf of the Joint Coordinating Committee of the Group of 77 and the Non-Aligned Movement, I wish to convey our pleasure at seeing you, Sir, preside over the General Assembly and also warmly to congratulate you on your successful initiative to establish a Working Group to address the issue of strengthening the United Nations system. We also congratulate you on guiding us towards a consensus on this subject. I also wish to extend, on behalf of the Joint Coordinating Committee, congratulations and particular appreciation to Ambassador Sreenivasan of India for his patient but firm guidance of the negotiations on the resolution.

The resolution we have adopted is also the result of constructive negotiations and cooperation on the part of all groups and delegations. All sides exercised flexibility and made the necessary compromises in order to reach consensus.

The Joint Coordinating Committee of the Group of 77 and the Non-Aligned Movement views the resolution, and hence the Working Group we have established, as an important vehicle for considering and identifying by consensus various proposals aimed at strengthening the United Nations system. We also attach importance to the fact that this Working Group shall be at a high level and open-ended — in other words, open to the participation of all Member States. This, in our view, is an essential prerequisite for achieving a real consensus on the output of the Working Group.

We further recognize and fully support the agreement that the Working Group shall not duplicate the work of the other Working Groups, nor should a new Working Group impede the efforts of the other Working Groups in fulfilling their respective mandates. This particular agreement, in operative paragraph 2, is the only way to ensure a successful and meaningful implementation of the mandate of the Working Group. Maintaining regular contacts with the bureaux of the other Working Groups, as called for in the resolution, would help in ensuring that duplication of work is avoided.

The Joint Coordinating Committee is prepared to begin substantive work at a suitable time during the fiftieth session. In this regard, full account should be taken of the heavy work schedule of the General Assembly, particularly at the fiftieth session, and of the constraints faced by smaller delegations. Above all, and given the open-ended nature of the Working Group, we must ensure the fullest participation of all delegations in its deliberations. The Joint Coordinating Committee of the Group of 77 and the Non-Aligned Movement is

particularly keen on ensuring that this basic concern be observed in determining the schedule of meetings of the Group. Given the importance of the task entrusted to the Working Group, universal participation is essential to its success. We also note your observation, Mr. President, that the bulk of the substantive work would begin in 1996.

Finally, we intend to continue working constructively with all other groups and delegations and to participate actively in the Working Group. It is truly our hope that this new Working Group will play a major part in strengthening the United Nations system so that the United Nations can play an effective role in meeting the global challenges of the twenty-first century.

Mr. Balzan (Malta): My delegation would like to associate itself with the statement made earlier by the Permanent Representative of Spain on behalf of the European Union.

It is with satisfaction that we welcome the adoption of the resolution, without a vote, on the question of the strengthening of the United Nations system.

We would particularly like to express our appreciation to you, Mr. President, for your tireless efforts to ensure the successful outcome of your initiative. Our expressions of gratitude are also directed at Ambassador Sreenivasan, who displayed all his diplomatic skills in steering the "informal informals" to a successful conclusion.

Ever since it joined the Organization, Malta has been at the forefront in highlighting the need to reform the organization and institutional structures of the United Nations in order to better face the realities and challenges of the day.

It is deeply satisfying to this delegation to witness your continued interest, Mr. President, in pursuing the initiatives taken by your predecessors in their efforts to enhance the effectiveness of the Organization. The input contributed by past Presidents towards the consolidation and reform process warrants our acknowledgement. It was during the forty-fifth session that the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malta, Mr. Guido de Marco, then President of the General Assembly, launched a number of proposals aimed at the reform of the various institutions within the United Nations system — and this at a time when the international community was experiencing a momentous phase of transition.

Following up on the initiatives taken by Mr. de Marco, the Government of Malta earlier this year submitted a request for the inclusion of an item on the provisional agenda of the fiftieth session on the review of the role of the Trusteeship Council.

My delegation sincerely hopes, Sir, that your successors will continue to develop the ongoing process of reform initiated by your predecessors, a process that you have successfully pursued.

Mr. Biørn Lian (Norway): Let me first say that we are all deeply indebted to you, Mr. President, for the determination you have shown to ensure the adoption of draft resolution A/49/L.68 on the strengthening of the United Nations system, and we are also sincerely grateful for the efficient manner in which Ambassador Sreenivasan of the Mission of India guided the consultations that produced the present text.

Norway wholeheartedly supports all efforts to strengthen the United Nations system and to strengthen its role, capacity, effectiveness and efficiency. We believe that the establishment of the Open-ended High-level Working Group should become a vehicle for the kind of reform and revitalization of the Organization that is needed if its full potential is to be realized and if the Organization is to be able to respond more fully to the needs and aspirations of the peoples of the world and of future generations.

The timing could not be better. The fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations is the right occasion to take stock of the lessons learned during the first 50 years, lessons acquired against the background of wars, cold and hot; efforts at development and the eradication of poverty; and the aspirations of peoples to self-determination and decolonization; and we should look ahead. Proposals for reform should, in our view, come to fruition before the end of the fiftieth session. That would be an important signal to the outside world that we, Members of the United Nations, give this work the necessary attention and priority.

The Nordic countries have a long tradition of promoting equitable and forward-looking reform in the United Nations system. The urgency of the issue was again pointed out by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the five Nordic countries on 31 August. They stressed, among other things, the importance of arriving at concrete results in the various Working Groups that deal with reform, and they reiterated their strong support for

the United Nations and for global multinational cooperation.

We would like to stress the need for the work of the High-level Working Group to be future-oriented and truly visionary. Its work should be broader based and also take account of the debate, the ideas and the proposals generated outside Government circles and the United Nations, such as the report on global governance, the Carlsson-Ramphal report. We therefore share the view of the Secretary-General in his report on the work of the Organization, where he refers to the recent reports of a number of independent Commissions on the United Nations in its next 50 years as being of particular relevance for the work of the High-level Working Group.

We look forward to the start of the work of the Working Group and pledge our full and active support.

The President (*interpretation from French*): I should like to thank all those delegations that participated in the work that made it possible to establish the Working Group, and particularly those that allowed for the agreed formulation. It was not easy; imagination and resolve were needed. For this, I should like to express my thanks.

I think this resolution is the result of everything that was said in plenary by all delegations, and especially by the Heads of delegations. All of them called for reform of the United Nations on the eve of the twenty-first century.

High-level Open-ended Working Group on the Financial Situation of the United Nations

Report of the High-level Open-ended Working Group on the Financial Situation of the United Nations (A/49/43)

Draft decision (A/49/43, para. 33)

The President (*interpretation from French*):I wish sincerely to congratulate Ambassador Ernst Sucharipa and Her Excellency Mrs. Annette des Iles for their skill in directing the work of the Group. I thank them very sincerely, and I congratulate them on their work.

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the report (A/49/963) of the Fifth Committee on this item?

It was so decided.

The President (*interpretation from French*): The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision contained in paragraph 33 of the report of the High-level Open-ended Working Group on the Financial Situation of the United Nations.

May I take it that the General Assembly decides to adopt the draft decision contained in paragraph 33 of document A/49/43?

The draft decision was adopted.

Mr. Yáñez-Barnuevo (Spain) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. Cyprus and Malta associate themselves with the content of this statement.

The European Union, as it has already stated on previous occasions, particularly in the High-level Working Group on the Financial Situation of the United Nations, attaches the greatest political importance to the need to find a solution to the Organization's financial crisis in order to establish a solid, permanent financial base for the Organization, thus enabling the United Nations to carry out all the mandates entrusted to it.

In this respect, I wish to recall that at its meeting held in Cannes last 26 and 27 June the European Council adopted a solemn declaration on the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations in which it stressed that

> "the success and proper functioning of the United Nations depend above all on the political support of its Member States and on the resources they put at its disposal, notably by full, punctual and unconditional fulfilment of their financial obligations".

We have just adopted without a vote the draft decision recommended by the High-level Working Group on the Financial Situation of the United Nations, by which note is taken of the Working Group's work and it is decided that the Group should continue its work during the coming session of the General Assembly. While taking a positive view of this decision, the European Union wishes to underline the increasingly imperative need to adopt a comprehensive package of measures to improve the financial situation of the United Nations.

In this regard, the European Union wishes to express its concern over the Working Group's inability so far to recommend any concrete measures, despite the

time and efforts devoted to consideration of the issue. As the Secretary-General told the Working Group last 22 June, and as he recently reiterated in his report (A/50/1) on the work of the Organization, concrete measures must be adopted, possibly including some of those that have already been proposed. At any rate, it is necessary to take decisions to prevent the financial situation from continuing to deteriorate day by day.

The European Union has noted with great concern the statement made in the Fifth Committee on 12 September 1995 by the Under-Secretary-General for the Department of Administration and Management, Mr. Connor, in which he stressed the continual grave deterioration of the financial situation of the Organization.

We recognize that this situation requires urgent measures by the Secretariat, but we wish to reiterate our view that the suspension of reimbursements owed to troop-contributing States should not be regarded as anything but a short-term measure, in view of the heavy and unfair financial burden it places on those countries, particularly those that have fulfilled their financial obligations to the Organization. We hope that other measures will be proposed in a proper attempt to resolve the current situation and that proposals for such measures will be submitted to the General Assembly, in accordance with what Mr. Connor said in his statement.

The European Union, which has been very active in the work of the High-level Working Group and has presented various proposals regarding all the elements of the Group's programme of work, including some detailed proposals for a possible revision of the scales of assessment and the establishment of incentives and disincentives, wishes to reiterate its full readiness to collaborate constructively with all Member States to achieve concrete results.

In addition, the member States of the European Union, which in 1995 are contributing 34.4 per cent of the Organization's ordinary budget and 36.7 per cent of the peace-keeping budget, and which in the first half of this year — through 30 June 1995 — had paid more than 50 per cent of the total contributions actually collected for both budgets, would like to recall that, as an indispensable condition for resolving the financial crisis of the United Nations, all Member States must clearly demonstrate their willingness to fulfil wholly, punctually and unconditionally their financial obligations under the Charter.

For this reason, the European Union considers that any decision that interferes with the fulfilment of these obligations would without any doubt aggravate the current serious financial situation and would also hinder the Organization's capacity to carry out the programmes entrusted to it and to manage them effectively. In this regard, the European Union would like to point out that the unilateral decision taken by the main contributor to limit its contribution to the peace-keeping budget to 25 per cent is unacceptable.

The European Union also wishes to express its appreciation to the Vice-Chairpersons of the High-level Working Group for the excellent manner in which they are conducting its deliberations, as well as to the Secretariat for the ample and interesting documentation provided, which will facilitate the work of the Group in the coming months. In this respect, the European Union would like to receive from the Secretariat consolidated periodical information on all aspects of the cash flow situation of the Organization and, based on the existing data, information on the amounts owed to each Member State.

Finally, the European Union wishes to reiterate once more the readiness of its member States to continue participating constructively in the High-level Working Group, as soon as it resumes its work. The High-level Working Group should meet as early as possible during the forthcoming regular session of the General Assembly in order to establish the basis for finalizing its work during the fiftieth session.

Mr. Mabilangan (Philippines): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on the report of the High-level Open-ended Working Group on the Financial Situation of the United Nations.

At the outset, the Group of 77 and China wish to express their appreciation to you, Mr. President, for your valuable efforts, which led to the adoption by consensus of resolution 49/143 on the establishment of this Working Group, and for your wisdom and distinguished leadership which guided its deliberations.

The Group of 77 and China also wish to pay special tribute to the two Vice-Chairmen, Ambassador Ernst Sucharipa of Austria and Ambassador Annette des Iles of Trinidad and Tobago, for their commendable efforts and the manner in which they steered the work of the Working Group, and for their determination to adopt the report by consensus.

The Group of 77 and China also wish to acknowledge with sincere appreciation the valuable technical assistance provided by the Secretariat to this Working Group.

The current serious financial situation of the Organization is a concern shared by all Member States. In this context, the Group of 77 and China have actively participated in the deliberations of the Working Group as an indication of their desire to find urgent and viable solutions to the cash-flow problem which has continuously beset the Organization and has threatened its capability to fulfil the mandates entrusted to it by us, the Member States, as well as to meet its own financial obligations.

The Group of 77 and China express the hope that the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations will be seized by Member States so that all outstanding contributions and arrears will be paid promptly, mainly by the major contributors, as a reaffirmation of Member States' determination to strengthen the Organization in its role.

The report before us reflects the varying degrees of difference in the opinions expressed by Member States on the various issues and proposals presented by some Member States and the Secretariat. For their part, the Group of 77 and China have already outlined their views on the approach to be taken in addressing these issues. I would therefore not take the time of the Assembly in reiterating the position of the Group of 77 and China on these issues. However, it is the feeling of the Group of 77 and China that this Working Group still has a long and arduous way to go in the search for a viable solution to the serious financial problems of the United Nations, which we Member States have collectively recognized in resolution 41/213. In this regard, we joined the consensus decision which the Assembly has just adopted for the Working Group to continue its work at the next session.

The Group of 77 and China continue to attach great significance and importance to this item on the financial situation of the United Nations. It is therefore the hope of our Group that the timing of the calendar of meetings of the Working Group will afford all Member States the opportunity to participate in the work of the Working Group, bearing in mind the activities that will take place during the regular session. In this regard, the Group of 77 and China would prefer the Working Group to resume its substantive work early next year.

In conclusion, the Group of 77 and China will continue to participate in the work of this Working Group in a positive and constructive manner.

Mr. Biørn Lian (Norway): I should like briefly to associate my delegation with the remarks made a moment ago by the representative of Spain, speaking on behalf of the European Union and, in particular, the concern voiced at the further serious deterioration of the financial situation of the United Nations and at the unilateral decision of one major Member to limit its contribution to the peace-keeping budget to 25 per cent.

The suspension of reimbursement and payment for Letters of Assist to troop contributors announced by Under-Secretary-General Connor in the Fifth Committee will unfairly affect those countries that are good payers of contributions to the United Nations. We trust that Member countries will be given an opportunity to discuss the economy measures being put in place.

Mr. Baluch (Pakistan): My delegation wishes to associate itself with the statement made by the Chairman of the Group of 77 on the overall financial situation of the Organization. However, my delegation would wish to refer to the statement by Under-Secretary-General Connor regarding further deterioration of the financial situation of the Organization and the consequent decision to suspend reimbursement to the troop-contributing countries.

Pakistan has been among the countries which have paid their assessed contribution to the Organization in full and on time. My delegation feels that the decision to suspend reimbursement is likely to create hardships for troop-contributing countries. My delegation would therefore sincerely hope that ways and means will quickly be found to lift this, hopefully, temporary embargo on the reimbursement to troop-contributing countries.

Mr. Zulkifli (Malaysia): My delegation would like to associate itself with the statement made by the Ambassador of the Philippines on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on this item. May I also take this opportunity to join in support of the statements made by previous speakers on the issue of the suspension of reimbursement to Member States, especially troop-contributing countries.

Having heard the statement of the Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Joseph Connor, on 12 September 1995 before the Fifth Committee, as well as that of the

Secretary-General himself a couple of months back in the High-level Working Group on the Financial Situation of the United Nations, my delegation would like to express its regret that, in the light of the serious financial situation, the United Nations Secretariat has to resort to withholding payment to troop-contributing countries.

Malaysia is currently among the largest troop-contributing countries participating in the various peace-keeping missions, with some 1,500 troops abroad. It is to be regretted that countries like Malaysia, which is also one of the countries that have paid their assessments to both the regular and the peace-keeping budgets in full and on time, are in effect being penalized for no wrong-doing of their own. This could have an effect on the participation of other troop-contributing countries in future peace-keeping operations.

On several occasions, my delegation has called on the Members of the United Nations, especially the major contributors, to fulfil their Charter obligations and make their mandatory payments to the United Nations in full, on time and without conditions. It is sad that, on the eve of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, Member States are in fact not fully committed to and supportive of the work and functioning of the United Nations.

I should like once again to call on Member States to meet their financial obligations so that the United Nations can function properly. I hope that the troop-contributing countries will be spared such a penalty as I have described. Every effort should be made to ensure that Member States, especially the major contributors, urgently respond and fulfil their Charter obligations. My delegation would like to see the United Nations function on a sound and secure footing at the coming fiftieth session of the General Assembly.

The President (*interpretation from French*): We have thus concluded our consideration of agenda item 10.

Agenda item 8 *(continued)*

Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

Request for the inclusion of an additional sub-item submitted by the Secretary-General (A/49/242)

The President (*interpretation from French*): The Assembly will now consider the request for the inclusion on the agenda of the forty-ninth session of an additional sub-item of agenda item 17, "Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments". In this connection, a note by the Secretary-General (A/49/242) has been circulated.

In his note, of 10 August 1995, the Secretary-General proposes to appoint Mr. Rubens Ricupero as Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development for a term of office of four years, beginning on 15 September 1995 and ending on 14 September 1999.

Inasmuch as agenda item 17 does not include a sub-item relating to the appointment to fill the vacancy, it is proposed that a sub-item entitled "Confirmation of the appointment of the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development" be included on the agenda of the forty-ninth session.

Unless there is any objection, may I take it that the General Assembly agrees, under the circumstances of the present case just described, that the provision of rule 40 of the rules of procedure, which would require a meeting of the General Committee on the question of the inclusion of this sub-item on the agenda, could be waived?

It was so decided.

The President (*interpretation from French*): May I also take it that the Assembly wishes to include an additional sub-item under item 17 to read as follows:

"(k) Confirmation of the appointment of the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development"?

It was so decided.

The President (*interpretation from French*): Representatives are aware that such a sub-item is customarily considered directly in plenary meeting. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to consider this sub-item directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

The President (*interpretation from French*): May I further take it that the Assembly agrees to proceed immediately to the consideration of the recommendation in the note by the Secretary-General contained in document A/49/242?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 17 *(continued)*

Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments

(k) Confirmation of the appointment of the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

It was so decided.

The President (*interpretation from French*): I therefore invite members to turn their attention once again to document A/49/242, containing a note by the Secretary-General on sub-item (k) of agenda item 17, which deals with the confirmation of the appointment of the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. In paragraph 2 of his note of 10 August 1995, the Secretary-General proposes the appointment of Mr. Rubens Ricupero as Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development for a term of office of four years, beginning on 15 September 1995 and ending on 14 September 1999.

May I take it that the General Assembly, on the proposal of the Secretary-General, wishes to confirm the appointment of Mr. Rubens Ricupero as Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development for a term of office of four years, beginning on 15 September 1995 and ending on 14 September 1999?

It was so decided.

Mr. Mabilangan (Philippines): Speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, I am very pleased to note the confirmation just made by the General Assembly of the appointment of Mr. Rubens Ricupero of Brazil as the new Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

I am sure that the international community welcomes the appointment of Mr. Ricupero. We in the Group of 77 should also like to pay a special tribute to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali for ending more than a year and a half of anxious waiting for the new Secretary-General of UNCTAD. We wish to express the hope that the Secretary-General of the United Nations will provide Mr. Ricupero with full support in order to enable him to carry out his task. Mr. Ricupero brings to UNCTAD his vast managerial and diplomatic experience. We are confident that under his stewardship UNCTAD will attain new heights.

The developing countries attach particular importance to the work of UNCTAD as a development-oriented body in the United Nations system. UNCTAD has played a central role in providing the General Assembly with the substantive inputs needed to undertake analytical and policy-oriented work in the economic and development fields.

The developing countries are ever more convinced that UNCTAD must be strengthened so that it can exercise fully its development mandate, particularly in the light of the globalization of the international economy and the deepening of economic interdependence among States. UNCTAD has further acquired greater relevance as a result of the creation of the World Trade Organization, which has reinforced the need for a policy-oriented trade forum or institution with a strong development perspective.

Next year delegations of countries will travel to South Africa for the Ninth UNCTAD Conference. UNCTAD IX should usher in an invigorated UNCTAD as a forum for providing important inputs and directions for development. The appointment of Mr. Rubens Ricupero as the new Secretary-General of UNCTAD definitely augurs well for the success of that very important gathering of Member countries.

Mr. Ziauddin (Bangladesh): My delegation would like to join others in welcoming the appointment of Mr. Rubens Ricupero to head the Secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and we would like to congratulate him on his appointment as the Secretary-General of UNCTAD.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations has done a most commendable job by nominating Mr. Ricupero, and we thank him for this. This is a clear demonstration of the strong belief of the international community that UNCTAD continues to play an important role in the field of trade and development. We fully subscribe to the statement made by the Chairman of the Group of 77. We are confident that, with his knowledge of the United Nations system and interest in both development and international trade, Mr. Ricupero will lead the organization in an efficient and professional manner in the coming years.

Mr. Ricupero's appointment also augurs well for the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Mid-term Global Review on the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the

1990s, scheduled to be held in New York from 26 September. We believe that under his able and inspiring leadership UNCTAD will play a crucial role with renewed vigour in the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s and particularly for the remainder of the decade. The least developed countries pledge their unreserved support to him in the discharge of his new responsibility.

Mr. Amorim (Brazil) (*interpretation from French*): Before turning to the question of the appointment of Mr. Rubens Ricupero, I should like, Mr. President, since I had the privilege of being the first to welcome and congratulate you at the opening of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly, to extend to you my appreciation and that of my Government for the skill and wisdom with which you have presided over our work. It is an honour once again for me to address the Assembly under your distinguished presidency.

(spoke in English)

I should like also to express my appreciation and that of my Government to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for appointing Ambassador Rubens Ricupero to the post of Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, our cherished and valued UNCTAD. I wish also to convey our gratitude to the Member States for the confirmation of his appointment by the General Assembly.

Let me also convey my gratitude for the warm words of welcome expressed by Ambassador Mabilangan of the Philippines on behalf of the Group of 77. I also extend my thanks to the Permanent Representative of Bangladesh for his stimulating words.

Ambassador Ricupero has a history of outstanding service to the Brazilian Government and to the international community as a public civil servant, a scholar, a statesman and, above all, a humanist devoted to the causes of development and international cooperation. Ambassador Ricupero won the undisputed respect of his colleagues as a Permanent Representative in Geneva and as President of the Contracting Parties during a particularly difficult period in the Uruguay Round. As his successor in Geneva, I had the privilege of witnessing the recognition of his professional competence and human qualities.

Ambassador Ricupero has also won wide respect for the important roles he later played in public life, such as Brazilian Ambassador to Washington and Minister in charge of the environment. As Minister of Finance at the crucial time of the implementation of the "Real" plan, he played a major role in the stabilization of the Brazilian economy and helped decisively in the negotiations that led to the consolidation of the Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR).

Ambassador Ricupero rises to the position of Secretary-General of UNCTAD at a particularly relevant moment, when the United Nations celebrates its fiftieth anniversary. He will certainly be able to make an important contribution to the efforts currently under way to further promote the role of the United Nations in the central issues of the world economy. The implementation of the Uruguay Round and the establishment of the World Trade Organization are a historic breakthrough in the international economy. I am certain that UNCTAD, with our renewed support, will continue to play an outstanding role in the post-Uruguay-Round era.

As Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations, I wish to stress once more how honoured my country feels at seeing one of its most distinguished citizens being given such an important and challenging responsibility.

The President (*interpretation from French*): We have thus concluded consideration of sub-item (k) of agenda item 17.

Agenda item 42 *(continued)*

The situation in Central America: procedures for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace and progress in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development

Report of the Secretary-General (A/49/955)

Note by the Secretary-General (A/49/929)

Letter from the Secretary-General (A/49/882)

Draft resolution (A/49/L.69)

The President (*interpretation from French*): The report of the Secretary-General has been circulated in document A/49/955.

The Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the second report of the Director of the United Nations

Mission for the Verification of Human Rights in Guatemala is contained in document A/49/929.

In addition, a letter dated 10 April 1995 from the Secretary-General has been circulated in document A/49/882.

The Assembly also has before it a draft resolution issued as document A/49/L.69.

I now call on the representative of Mexico to introduce draft resolution A/49/L.69.

Mr. Albin (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): May I at the outset inform the Assembly that in addition to the six countries listed, the following have also become co-sponsors of the draft resolution: Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Belize, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Denmark, El Salvador, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Panama, Portugal, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation, Slovakia, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

I have the honour to introduce, on behalf of its sponsors, the draft resolution circulated in document A/49/L.69, entitled "United Nations Mission for the Verification of Human Rights and of Compliance with the Commitments of the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights in Guatemala".

The report submitted by the Secretary-General last 11 August, circulated as document A/49/955, indicates that the United Nations Mission for the Verification of Human Rights and of Compliance with the Commitments of the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights in Guatemala (MINUGUA) continued to fulfil the verification mandate entrusted to it in the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights and to contribute to the strengthening of the national institutions and bodies charged with the protection of human rights in Guatemala. In his report the Secretary-General also mentions the importance of the Agreement on Identity and Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the parties' request that the Mission verify the human rights aspects of that Agreement.

The report of the Director of the Mission, submitted by the Secretary-General for the attention of the General Assembly and circulated in document A/49/929, describes both the framework within which the Mission carried out its activities and the work it performed. It includes summaries of several of the cases examined and the conclusions and recommendations relating to the implementation of the commitments envisaged in the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights. Among other positive elements pointed out by the Director of MINUGUA, we find the cooperation of the parties and their support for the work of the Mission.

All this makes it clear that MINUGUA is an effective instrument of the international community's support for the efforts of Guatemalans to reach a definitive peace in their country. We, the sponsors, are convinced that MINUGUA's presence in Guatemala is important and should continue. The draft resolution we are introducing to the General Assembly today extends the mandate of the Mission for an additional period of six months, on the basis of the Secretary-General's recommendation.

The draft resolution welcomes the signing of the Agreement on Identity and Rights of Indigenous Peoples, highlighting its importance in the peace process in Guatemala and pointing out that it is also a decisive event in the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People. It also takes note of the parties' request for MINUGUA to verify immediately the human rights aspects of that Agreement.

It also welcomes the Secretary-General's report on MINUGUA, takes note of the second report of the Director of the Mission and calls on the Government of Guatemala and the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG) to implement the recommendations of the first and second reports of the Director of the Mission and to comply fully with their commitments under the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights and with the human rights aspects of the Agreement on Identity and Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The draft resolution also highlights the importance of mobilizing national and international resources to strengthen the Guatemalan system for the protection of human rights and welcomes the donor community's support for the implementation of the agreements reached in the peace process in Guatemala, as well as the efforts of international and regional financial institutions.

It reiterates the importance of the commitment of the parties, undertaken in the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights, to provide the Mission with their utmost support and all the cooperation needed for it to carry out its functions, particularly with respect to the security of the members of the Mission.

It also calls on the parties to arrive at an agreement on the item entitled "Socio-economic aspects and agrarian situation", which is at present under discussion in the negotiating process, and to continue their efforts to conclude as soon as possible an agreement on a firm and lasting peace.

Finally, the draft resolution requests the Secretary-General to keep the General Assembly fully informed on the fulfilment of the provisions of the draft resolution.

As I said before, we, the sponsors, are convinced that by extending the mandate of the Mission for the Verification of Human Rights and of Compliance with the Commitments of the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights in Guatemala, the international community will be making a contribution to the efforts of the Guatemalan people for reconciliation. It also constitutes a great element of support for the dialogue and negotiations between the Government of Guatemala and the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca, and its goal is for them to reach a definitive peace agreement in the shortest possible time.

By virtue of all this, we trust that this draft resolution, which is a manifestation of the effort to which the international community has committed itself with regard to the peace process in Guatemala, will be adopted unanimously by the General Assembly.

Mr. Yáñez-Barnuevo (Spain) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union.

The European Union notes with satisfaction that, since the General Assembly created the United Nations Mission for the Verification of Human Rights and of Compliance with the Commitments of the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights in Guatemala (MINUGUA) a year ago, it has been undergoing a process of consolidation, thus becoming a solid and efficient instrument for the verification of human rights in support of the peace process in that Central American country.

Since the adoption of resolution 49/236 last 31 March, by which MINUGUA's mandate was extended for six months, we have received the second report of the Director of the Mission, Mr. Leonardo Franco, dated 29 June. The conclusions and recommendations of the report deserve our attention.

On the one hand, among the positive factors, it is worth highlighting, in particular, the parties' cooperation with and support for the Mission's work, the widespread exercise of freedom of expression, the willingness of the highest Guatemalan authorities to promote the investigation and solving of crimes and the fact that the Government has not encouraged the organization of new Voluntary Civil Defence Committees.

On the other hand, among the worrisome aspects, it should be pointed out that most of the complaints submitted to the Mission have to do with violations of the right to life, the right of persons to integrity and security and the right to liberty. This proves that the greatest obstacle to the exercise of human rights in Guatemala continues to be impunity, and it underscores the responsibility of the various branches of Government to combat it.

We have also taken note of the Secretary-General's report (A/49/955) of 11 August 1995 on MINUGUA, which contains the Director of the Mission's assessment of the resources required for the verification of the human rights aspects of the Agreement on Identity and Rights of Indigenous Peoples and other activities of the Mission.

The European Union reminds both parties of the terms of resolution 49/236 and urges them to renew their effort to comply fully with the commitments they undertook under the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights and, in particular, to implement the recommendations contained in MINUGUA's reports. It underlines the responsibility of all sectors of society to cooperate in the eradication of the culture of violence and intolerance.

The European Union welcomes the fact that the parties have recently shown their willingness to reach the early conclusion of an agreement on a firm and lasting peace. The Contadora Declaration, signed by all the parties in the Guatemala peace process on 22 August 1995, is an encouraging message for the international community. It underlines the firm commitment to the peace process and the importance the parties attach to the next electoral process in the country taking place in the best possible conditions.

The commitments made in the Contadora Declaration, the importance of which has been underlined by the European Union in the statement made by the Presidency of the Union on 12 September last, as well as the announcement by the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Union (URNG) that it will observe a

cease-fire during the electoral period from 1 to 13 November, will contribute to the creation of an appropriate climate for the people of Guatemala to go to the polls on 12 November next, freely and without intimidation.

Full respect for the human rights of the population will also enable the participation of the whole of the people of Guatemala and the peaceful conduct of the elections. In the rural areas in particular, this requires the full cooperation of the Voluntary Civil Defense Committees (CVDC) in respecting and contributing to the climate of peace necessary for the successful holding of the elections.

We also hope that the negotiations between the Government of Guatemala and the URNG will make possible an early agreement on "the socio-economic aspects and the agrarian situation", in the positive spirit that moves both sides, under a renewed effort to complete as soon as possible an agreement on a firm and lasting peace.

The European Union encourages the parties to continue on this track, and welcomes the mediating role of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General and of the moderator of the peace process in Guatemala, with the assistance of the "Group of Friends", aimed at facilitating the successful completion of the peace process.

The Member States of the European Union have sponsored draft resolution A/49/L.69, prepared by the "Group of Friends", just introduced by the representative of Mexico. The draft would extend the mandate of MINUGUA for an additional period of six months, until 18 March 1996, in accordance with the recommendation of the Secretary-General contained in his report of 12 August last. We do this on the understanding that additional costs for funding the Mission from 1 January until 18 March 1996 will be met from within resources allocated for that purpose in the programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997. We hope the General Assembly will adopt this draft by consensus.

In compliance with this draft, MINUGUA will consolidate and extend its tasks to include verification of the human rights aspects of the Agreement on Identity and Rights of Indigenous Peoples, signed by the Government of Guatemala and the URNG on 31 March 1995. This will allow the Mission to deepen its deterrent effect on violations of human rights and progressively to eradicate the culture of impunity, with the cooperation of the parties in the Guatemala peace process and Guatemalan society as a whole.

The European Union considers that, through the presence of MINUGUA, the United Nations is contributing actively and positively to the Guatemala peace process, helping and encouraging the parties to reach a firm and lasting peace, which would allow the establishment of the foundations of democracy and development and of a true national reconciliation, in a climate of liberty and justice.

The progress in the peace negotiations and the forthcoming elections on 12 November underline the fact that the people of Guatemala eagerly wish to join the dynamic of peace, democracy and development that Central America is experiencing. We trust that, thanks to the commitment of the parties, this hope may soon be a reality for every citizen of Guatemala.

Mr. Biørn Lian (Norway): Norway is a member of the "Group of Friends" and a sponsor of draft resolution A/49/L.69, and I should therefore like to make a statement on this item.

Timetables in the negotiating process in Guatemala have been hard to keep, and it now looks highly unlikely that a final peace agreement will be signed during the present presidency. Although this is regrettable, it should not call for a wavering of the efforts of the United Nations and the international community to accomplish and support peace in Guatemala. The negotiations are difficult, but it is important to keep in mind that an extremely significant Agreement on the Identity and Rights of Indigenous Peoples was signed in March, and that progress is being made on the issue of socio-economic aspects and the agrarian situation.

The momentum of the peace process must be maintained. There is reason to hope that the upcoming elections will strengthen the democratic institutions of Guatemala. Sectors which traditionally have not participated in the electoral process have on this occasion taken a much more positive approach. The electorate has a wider choice of political alternatives, and the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG) is encouraging the Guatemalans to take advantage of their right to vote, and has also declared a unilateral cease-fire in the two weeks prior to the elections. It is extremely important that the new president, as well as the major parties in the new national assembly, feel a commitment to the peace process. The recent Contadora Declaration augurs well in that respect.

The establishment and deployment in Guatemala of the Mission for the Verification of Human Rights (MINUGUA) represent a significant step forward in the peace process. The presence of MINUGUA induces the parties to the armed conflict to respect their commitments, and it has given renewed hope to the civilian population that peace, justice, reconstruction and national reconciliation may become a reality in Guatemala. Meanwhile, the Members of the United Nations have to ensure that MINUGUA is given the necessary means to fulfil its mandate.

The Government Peace Commission, as well as the URNG, now seem to have a constructive and realistic approach to the peace negotiations. It is important that all sectors of Guatemalan society show the same spirit. Peace is a necessary first step before the people of Guatemala can address the tremendous challenges of an economic and social nature which are facing them. For some sectors it may be necessary to relinquish some of their privileges in order to make Guatemala a better place to live for all Guatemalans. Massive participation in the upcoming elections would be a very encouraging signal that the Guatemalans are ready, through peaceful means, to take their destiny in their own hands. In these endeavours they should be able to count on the continued assistance and support of the international community.

It is against this background that we recommend the adoption by consensus of draft resolution A/49/L.69 on the renewal of the mandate of MINUGUA for a further period of six months.

The President (*interpretation from French*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/49/L.69, entitled "United Nations Mission for the Verification of Human Rights and of Compliance with the Commitments of the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights in Guatemala".

I call on the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Perfiliev (Director, General Assembly Affairs Division, Department of Political Affairs) (*interpretation from French*): I should like to inform members that if the General Assembly were to adopt draft resolution A/49/L.69 it would, *inter alia*, decide to authorize the renewal of the mandate of the Mission for a further period of six months, that is, until 18 March 1996, in accordance with the recommendations of the Secretary-General.

In the context of its adoption of resolution 49/236 A, the General Assembly approved the additional appropriations required to finance the current mandate period and authorized the Secretary-General to allocate additional resources in 1995 if the mandate of the Mission were again renewed. The Secretary-General does not anticipate that the implementation of draft resolution A/49/L.69 would require any resources greater than those approved for the period 1994-1995.

With regard to additional resources for 1996, it is the Secretary-General's intention to submit a report to the General Assembly at its fiftieth session giving fuller details of the implementation of the Mission's mandate, as well as proposals for the General Assembly's approval regarding the necessary appropriations under the programme budget for 1996 to 1997.

The President (*interpretation from French*): May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt resolution A/49/L.69?

Draft resolution A/49/L.69 was adopted (resolution 49/236 B).

Mr. Castellanos-Carrillo (Guatemala) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I wish to express the gratitude of the people and Government of Guatemala to the international community, represented in the General Assembly, for having demonstrated once again its firm commitment to the Guatemalan peace process by renewing for the second time the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Verification of Human Rights and of Compliance with the Commitments of the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights in Guatemala, under the draft resolution that has just been adopted by consensus. Thus, the recommendation which the Secretary-General made in his report of 11 August, contained in document A/49/955, has been approved. Our appreciation goes particularly to the Group of Friends of the Guatemala peace process and the other sponsors of the draft resolution just adopted. I hardly need to say that we remain deeply grateful to the Secretary-General for his continued support of the peace process and to his colleagues in this noble endeavour.

The Government of Guatemala has done all it can to respond appropriately to the exemplary work that has been and continues to be done by the Mission to help Guatemala solve the most acute and painful of the many problems it faces. This involves the imperative need to establish a firm and lasting peace, which is a necessary

condition for the exercise of human rights, the consolidation of democratic institutions and, on those essential foundations, the beginning of economic progress. The need to move ahead in this area is particularly important given the extreme poverty of a considerable part of the population.

We regret that the achievement of agreements with the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG) has not kept up with the new agreed timetable. It is worth noting, however, that on the very day of the last renewal of the Mission, 31 March this year, the sixth of a series of agreements between the Government and the URNG was signed. This was the Agreement on Identity and Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which the parties have agreed to implement immediately with respect to human rights. In the report I mentioned earlier, the Secretary-General expresses the view that this Agreement is

> "a very auspicious development at the beginning of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People". (*A/49/955, para. 2*)

My Government also wishes to emphasize that, as the Secretary-General says in his report, a new impetus has been given to the negotiations with the URNG, while the parties have shown the necessary political will to continue to forge ahead. Other positive elements also worthy of mention are indicated by the Secretary-General in paragraph 5 of his report. Among them are the virtual cessation of forcible military conscription, the widespread exercise of freedom of expression, the readiness of the authorities to promote the investigation and solution of crimes, and the fact that the organization of new voluntary civil defence committees has not been encouraged. At this time, the parties are negotiating, in the Mexican city of Puebla, on the important subject of social and economic aspects and the agrarian situation.

Thus, despite the deep-rooted and persistent social and institutional factors that have long affected the country, there is reason to hope that in the not-too-distant future this situation — which to a certain extent is a remnant of the cold war — will be rectified, leading to the achievement of the permanent peace which remains the most fervent hope of the people of Guatemala.

We have no doubt that the obstacles to a definitive peace in Guatemala will soon be overcome. When that goal is reached, the contribution of the United Nations will certainly have been essential.

The President (*interpretation from French*): May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 42?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 92 *(continued)*

Agenda for development

Progress report of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group of the General Assembly on An Agenda for Development (A/49/45)

Draft decision (A/49/45, sect. III)

The President (*interpretation from French*): Members will recall that by resolution 49/126 of 19 December 1994 the Assembly decided to establish an Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group of the General Assembly on An Agenda for Development, and requested the Working Group to report on the progress of its work before the conclusion of the forty-ninth session.

In this connection, the Assembly has before it a progress report (A/49/45) of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group and a draft decision contained in section III of the report.

I would like at this point to congratulate and thank the Vice-Chairmen responsible for the work of the Group, Ambassador René Valéry Mongbé of Benin and His Excellency Mr. Peter Osvald of Sweden. Not only were they able Chairmen, but they were also determined to conduct the work of the Group in the best possible manner.

The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision contained in section III of the progress report of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group.

The draft decision was adopted.

The President (*interpretation from French*): May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 92?

It was so decided.

Reports of the Fifth Committee

The President (*interpretation from French*): The General Assembly will now consider the reports of the Fifth Committee on agenda items 105 and 132. I request the Rapporteur of the Fifth Committee to introduce the reports of the Fifth Committee in one intervention.

Mr. Djacta (Algeria), Rapporteur of the Fifth Committee (*interpretation from French*): I have the honour to present to the General Assembly two reports of the Fifth Committee, relating to agenda items 105 and 132.

The General Assembly has, of course, already considered the reports of the Fifth Committee on agenda item 10, "Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization", and on agenda item 107, "Programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995".

Concerning agenda item 105, entitled "Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations", the Fifth Committee's report is contained in document A/49/820/Add.2. In paragraph 5 of that report, the Fifth Committee recommends that the General Assembly defer to its fiftieth session consideration of the question of the rationalization of the work of the Fifth Committee. The draft decision was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote.

Concerning agenda item 132, entitled "Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peace-keeping operations", the Fifth Committee's report is contained in document A/49/947/Add.1. In paragraph 7 of that report, the Fifth Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Before concluding my report on the work of the Fifth Committee at this forty-ninth session of the General Assembly, I should like to thank the Secretariat of the Fifth Committee, and in particular Mr. Joseph Acakpo-Satchivi, to whom I would pay special tribute. I must point out that the Secretariat of the Fifth Committee requires a further strengthening of its human resources in order to be able to discharge its functions in respect of the Fifth Committee and the Committee for Programme and Coordination, and I would appeal to the General Assembly to take this into account immediately at the beginning of the next session of the General Assembly.

The President (*interpretation from French*): If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the reports of the Fifth Committee that are before it today.

It was so decided.

The President (*interpretation from French*): May I remind members that under paragraph 7 of decision 34/401, the Assembly agreed that

> "When the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, i.e., either in the Committee or in plenary meeting, unless that delegation's vote in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee."

May I also remind delegations that, also in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Before we begin to take action on the recommendations contained in the reports of the Fifth Committee, I should like to advise representatives that we shall proceed to take decisions in the same manner as was done in the Committee.

Agenda item 105 *(continued)*

Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations: report of the Fifth Committee (Part III) (A/49/820/Add.2)

The President (*interpretation from French*): The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 5 of part III of its report.

May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to adopt the draft decision?

The draft decision was adopted.

The President (*interpretation from French*): May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 105?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 132 *(continued)*

Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peace-keeping operations: report of the Fifth Committee (Part II) (A/49/947/Add.1)

The President (*interpretation from French*): The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution entitled "Relocation of Belarus to the Group of Member States set out in paragraph 3 (c) of resolution 43/232", which the Fifth Committee recommends in its report.

The draft resolution was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 49/249 B).

Mr. Hudyma (Ukraine) (*interpretation from Russian*): The delegation of Ukraine wishes to express its satisfaction at the General Assembly's adoption of the draft resolution on the relocation of Belarus to group C in the special scale of assessments for peace-keeping operations. We believe this is a step in the right direction. It will lead to the removal of those glaring contradictions that, unfortunately, because of familiar circumstances, still interfere with the establishment of normal conditions with regard to countries' participation in the financing of the peace-keeping activities of the United Nations.

More than two years ago the Government of Ukraine appealed to Members of the Organization to relocate our State from group B to group C in the special scale of assessments for peace-keeping operations. However, even now, when most Member States recognize that Ukraine's presence in group B is one of the paradoxes of the current financial situation, a solution to the problem has not been found.

As a result of its difficult economic situation, and also because of its excessively large contribution to the financing of the activities of the United Nations, particularly peace-keeping operations, Ukraine has now become one of the major debtor countries *vis-à-vis* the Organization. In confirmation of our commitment to the ideas of the financial viability and health of the United Nations, which can be achieved through the implementation of a comprehensive reform, our delegation wishes to declare that our Government can no longer continue to accept the existing situation.

During the forthcoming session of the General Assembly, Ukraine will take measures aimed at an immediate decision on relocating us to group C. In the final analysis, such a decision will lead to improving and stabilizing the financial situation of the United Nations.

The President (*interpretation from French*): May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 132?

It was so decided.

Programme of work

The President (*interpretation from French*): I should like to inform delegations that the first meeting of the High-level Open-ended Working Group of the General Assembly on the Strengthening of the United Nations System will be held on Monday, 18 September, at 10 a.m. in the General Assembly Hall.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.

United Nations A/49/PV.108

General Assembly
Forty-ninth Session

Official Records

108th plenary meeting
Monday, 18 September 1995, 10.30 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. ESSY ..... (Côte d'Ivoire)

The meeting was called to order at 11.05 a.m.

Agenda item 112 *(continued)*

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (Article 19 of the Charter) (A/49/838/Add.5)

The President (*interpretation from French*): At the 107th plenary meeting of the General Assembly, held on Thursday 14 September, I informed the Assembly that, bearing in mind the communication dated 14 September addressed to me by the Secretary-General, distributed as provisional document A/49/838/Add.5, Guinea-Bissau and Mauritania had made the necessary payments to reduce their arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter. I also reported that Equatorial Guinea had made the necessary payment to bring its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter. The final version of document A/49/838/Add.5, which the Assembly has before it today, has been amended on the basis of this new information.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of this information?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 10 *(continued)*

Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization

The President (*interpretation from French*): Following the issuance in June 1992 of "An Agenda for Peace", an Informal Open-ended Working Group was established at the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly to consider and respond to the Secretary-General's recommendation contained in the report. During that session, the Working Group submitted to the Assembly two resolutions, 47/120 A, entitled "An Agenda for Peace: preventive diplomacy and related matters", and resolution 47/120 B, covering the remaining recommendations contained in the report.

As members will recall, at its 98th plenary meeting, on 10 March 1995, at the request of a number of delegations and bearing in mind the statement by the President of the Security Council contained in document S/PRST/1995/9, the Informal Open-ended Working Group was reconvened to consider An Agenda for Peace (A/47/277-S/24111) and its supplement, A/50/60-S/1995/1).

The President designated the Permanent Representative of Egypt, Ambassador Nabil Elaraby, and the Permanent Representative of Spain, Ambassador Juan Antonio Yáñez-Barnuevo, Chairman and Vice-Chairman, respectively. The Working Group met between 28 March and 14 September 1995.

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This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one month of the date of the meeting*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

Following consultations among interested States, the Bureau identified key areas and established four subgroups to consider: first, the question of United Nations-imposed sanctions, coordinated by Ambassador Celso Luiz Nunes Amorim of Brazil; secondly, coordination, coordinated by Ambassador Hans Jacob Biørn Lian of Norway; thirdly, preventive diplomacy and peacemaking, coordinated by Ambassador Richard Butler of Australia; and fourthly, post-conflict peace-building, coordinated by Ms. Vijayalakshmi Menon, Minister Counsellor of Singapore. Substantive discussions were held in each of the subgroups, resulting in non-papers prepared by their respective coordinators. These non-papers contain elements to be incorporated into a future resolution or resolutions.

Owing to time constraints and ongoing consultations, however, the Working Group was unable to conclude its work and would like to resume it during the fiftieth session of the General Assembly, with a view to submitting a draft resolution or resolutions for its consideration.

Subject to any directives which the General Assembly might give in that connection, it is recommended that the Informal Open-ended Working Group on An Agenda for Peace reconvene its meetings during the fiftieth session of the Assembly.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 10?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 37 *(continued)*

Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance

(b) Special economic assistance to individual countries or regions: draft resolution (A/49/L.70)

The President (*interpretation from French*): I call on the representative of Antigua and Barbuda to introduce draft resolution A/49/L.70.

Mr. Hurst (Antigua and Barbuda): Two weeks ago, on 4, 5 and 6 September, a terrible natural disaster struck the vulnerable small island States of the eastern Caribbean. A hurricane, unprecedented in both size and fury, unleashed wind gusts of more than 160 miles per hour stretching over a 700-mile area. Pounding surf and sheets of rain accompanied this furious hurricane. Death and destruction followed in its path on virtually every island. More than $1 billion worth of damage was caused to businesses, homes, schools, churches and government buildings; electricity and telephone delivery systems were completely destroyed in several island countries, and our hospitals were especially hard hit.

In the light of the damage caused to the vulnerable Member States by this natural disaster, and taking into account the urgency of the needs of the citizens of our small island countries, a draft resolution has been circulated among Member States. We seek the Assembly's support for draft resolution A/49/L.70.

This draft resolution mirrors another adopted by the General Assembly, in 1989, when a similar hurricane struck. Its preambular paragraphs make reference to earlier resolutions of the General Assembly which addressed natural disasters in the Caribbean region and note the efforts made by Governments of the region, and others, to initiate the process of reconstruction. Operative paragraph 1 expresses solidarity and support for the afflicted States, and operative paragraph 2 expresses the General Assembly's appreciation to all States and United Nations bodies which have provided emergency relief to the affected countries thus far. In operative paragraph 3 the draft resolution urges all States to contribute generously to the relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction effort under way in the affected countries. In operative paragraph 4 the resolution seeks the collaboration of international financial institutions and various bodies and agencies of the United Nations system for the purpose of mobilizing resources in order to help the Governments of the affected countries. In operative paragraph 5 the resolution seeks the issuance of a report during the fiftieth session which would make it possible for Member States to be informed of the steps taken by the various United Nations bodies and agencies in response to this natural disaster.

I wish to point out that prior to hurricane Luis, Antigua and Barbuda was preparing to receive one half of the population of neighbouring Montserrat, since a volcano on Montserrat was threatening to erupt. Today, because thousands are homeless in Antigua and Barbuda, we are unable to provide, on our own, a safe refuge for our brethren from Montserrat. At the same time, homes and other buildings were damaged in Montserrat by Hurricane Luis, and the volcano there still threatens to erupt. United Nations agencies had been working closely with Antigua and Barbuda to provide for those Montserratians made destitute by the volcano. The

hurricane has compounded the situation on Montserrat and in Antigua and Barbuda.

Tourism, the mainstay of Antigua and Barbuda's economy, is at a standstill, since many of our hotels located on the beaches of Antigua and Barbuda have been damaged. The inability to provide electricity, telephone service and running water prevents an immediate start-up of our very valuable tourism industry.

The banana industry of Dominica has been dealt another devastating blow. Electricity and running water have yet to be restored, and telephone communication to Dominica is virtually non-existent.

An estimated 60 per cent of the homes in Saint Kitts and Nevis were damaged by Hurricane Luis. The main hospital had several portions of its roof blown off. The damage is estimated at $60 million.

I wish to thank the following countries, States Members of the Latin American and Caribbean Group, for their assistance to my country during this time of need: the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Jamaica, Peru, Saint Lucia, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela — indeed, all of the Caribbean Community and all States Members of the Latin American and Caribbean Group. From outside our region, we have received the assistance of the Governments of Australia, Canada, Italy, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States. We have also made contact with other Governments from outside our region and anticipate assistance from them.

The fury of Hurricane Luis has once again proved the vulnerability of all of our small island States, and with the season not yet over, we can only pray that our islands will escape further devastation. The tragedy of global warming, we are told, is that we can expect many more of these furious storms in the future.

I have been authorized by the administering Power to note that the people of Saint Maarten, in the Netherlands Antilles, wish also to be considered in this draft resolution. A proposal has been made to include Saint Maarten, Netherlands Antilles, in the title of this draft resolution and to add, in the second, third and sixth preambular paragraphs and operative paragraphs 1 and 4 the words,

"and the people of Saint Maarten, Netherlands Antilles".

It is our expectation that this oral amendment will meet with the approval of the sponsors and other Member States.

May I list the sponsors we have thus far secured for this draft resolution: Algeria, Argentina, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Benin, Bolivia, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Cape Verde, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Fiji, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Jamaica, Kuwait, Mexico, Micronesia, Niger, Nicaragua, the Netherlands, Paraguay, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Senegal, Seychelles, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Sweden, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, Viet Nam and Venezuela.

It is our hope that we will never have to come back to the General Assembly for yet another resolution having to do with a natural disaster caused by another hurricane in our region.

The President *(interpretation from French):* The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/49/L.70, entitled "Emergency assistance to Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Montserrat and St. Kitts and Nevis", as orally revised by the representative of Antigua and Barbuda.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/49/L.70, as orally revised?

The draft resolution, as orally revised, was adopted (resolution 49/21 P).

The President *(interpretation from French):* May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 37 (b)?

It was so decided.

The President *(interpretation from French):* May I also take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 37 as a whole?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 33 *(continued)*

Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters

Report of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council (A/49/47)

The President *(interpretation from French):* The Assembly has before it a draft decision contained in paragraph 17 of the report of the Open-ended Working Group (A/49/47).

I wish to express my sincere thanks to His Excellency Mr. Fredrik Wilhelm Breitenstein, the Permanent Representative of Finland, and to His Excellency Mr. Nitya Pibulsonggram, the Permanent Representative of Thailand, who so ably conducted the discussions and complex negotiations of the Working Group. I also wish to express my appreciation for the constructive participation of Member States in the deliberations of the Working Group.

The Assembly will now take action on the draft decision contained in paragraph 17 of the report of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council (document A/49/47).

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt the draft decision?

The draft decision was adopted.

The President (*interpretation from French*): I call on the representative of Italy.

Mr. Ferrarin (Italy): I wish to express the satisfaction of the Italian delegation at the commitment that everyone has shown over the last few weeks to come to an agreement on the text of the report of the Open-ended Working Group, which the Assembly has before it today. Equally satisfying in our opinion is the compromise solution reached after long discussion, namely to circulate as an official document of the General Assembly a single compendium including the valuable joint assessment, prepared by the two Vice-Chairmen in their personal capacity, of the two rolling papers on clusters 1 and 2, as well as proposals and contributions presented by individual countries and groups of countries.

These documents, as a whole, appear to deserve adequate circulation and visibility since they provide a reliable picture of the complexity of the exercise under way, of the progress made in terms of clarification of respective positions, and of the distance that continues to separate these positions. As the report states,

> "Discussions also showed that important differences continue to exist in key issues before the Open-ended Working Group, and, therefore, further in-depth consideration of these issues is still required". (*A/49/47, para. 16*)

Since the beginning of this exercise, Italy has made every effort to make a constructive contribution to the work and was the first to present a detailed and comprehensive proposal to expand the Security Council, a proposal that was progressively refined in the light of indications made during the debate. We are very pleased that the revised version of our proposal, dated 15 May 1995, is included in the compendium that will be circulated as a General Assembly document. In it, we propose to address the demand for a genuine reform of the Security Council which would take into account the many needs felt by a great number and variety of countries, large and small, rather than solely by the small number of pretenders which aspire to a status of eternal and anachronistic privilege.

We are firmly convinced that 50 years after the birth of the United Nations the Security Council must be reformed to make it more representative, democratic and transparent, not just in words, but in deeds. To this end, we believe it is indispensable that there be a geographical rebalancing of its composition and easier access to a seat for all countries, especially for the 79 countries, including some of the founding Members, which have thus far never been elected — and not by choice — as well as for the 40 which have served only once. The perpetuation of a situation harmful to some 119 Members can no longer be tolerated. The reforms must remedy this situation.

In this same spirit, we must engage in a profound review of the Council's working methods and its relations with the general membership of the United Nations and with other bodies of the Organization. To this end, allow me to express Italy's deep dissatisfaction over the fact

that because of objections raised by no more than three or four countries the concept of democracy appears in paragraph 14 of the report to have been supported by "a large number of delegations", unlike the other inspiring principles of the reforms, on which there had rather been consensus. We are strongly convinced that, as pointed out by others during last week's debate, this "large number" of delegations represents the overwhelming majority of the countries that are participating in the exercise.

Apart from any restrictive definition of the concept of democracy, the need for democratization of the Security Council is, in our view, widely felt by the States Members of the United Nations, by the international community and, above all, by the peoples of the world, and represents perhaps the prime mover of the current exercise.

In closing, Sir, allow me on the occasion of the last meeting of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly to express to you the appreciation and gratitude of my country for the ability and dedication with which over the past year you have guided the work of the body that is the direct representative of the general membership of the United Nations.

The President *(interpretation from French):* May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude consideration of agenda item 33?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 16 *(continued)*

Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections

(a) Election of twelve members of the World Food Council

The President *(interpretation from French):* In accordance with resolution 3348 (XXIX) of 17 December 1974, the General Assembly elects the members of the World Food Council upon nomination by the Economic and Social Council.

Members will recall that at the 75th and 97th plenary meetings, held on 5 December 1994 and 28 February 1995, the Assembly elected 10 States, namely, Albania, Angola, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Indonesia, Kenya, the Marshall Islands, the Russian Federation and Uganda, as members of the World Food Council.

The General Assembly then decided to keep the sub-item on the agenda of the forty-ninth session in order to enable the Assembly to act on the election, upon nomination by the Economic and Social Council, of the two remaining members from the Western European and other States.

It is my understanding that the Economic and social Council has postponed the nominations for the two remaining members from the Western European and other States for a term of office expiring on 31 December 1997. The Economic and Social Council further postponed nominations for the one member from the Eastern European States and one member from the western European and other States for a term of office expiring on 31 December 1996, which had been postponed at the forty-eighth session of the Assembly.

As members know, this sub-item has been included in the provisional agenda of the fiftieth session.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 16?

It was so decided.

The President *(interpretation from French):* May I take it that it is also the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 16 as a whole?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 47

Armed Israeli aggression against the Iraqi nuclear installations and its grave consequences for the established international system concerning the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and international peace and security

The President *(interpretation from French):* Members will recall that, on 23 September 1994, the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the fiftieth session of the General Assembly.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it the draft agenda of the fiftieth session?

It was so decided.

The President *(interpretation from French):* This concludes our consideration of agenda item 47.

Agenda item 48

Launching of global negotiations on international economic cooperation for development

The President *(interpretation from French):* In connection with this item, representatives will recall that, on 23 September 1994, the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly. As members know, this item has been included in the provisional agenda of the fiftieth session.

May I take it that the Assembly considers that discussion on this item at the present session is concluded?

It was so decided.

The President *(interpretation from French):* This concludes our consideration of agenda item 48.

Agenda item 49

Implementation of the resolutions of the United Nations

The President *(interpretation from French):* Members will recall that, on 23 September 1994, the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the forty-ninth session. As members know, this item has been included in the provisional agenda of the fiftieth session.

May I take it that the Assembly considers that discussion on agenda item 49 at the present session is concluded?

It was so decided.

The President *(interpretation from French):* This concludes our consideration of agenda item 49.

Agenda item 50

The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security

The President *(interpretation from French):* Members may recall that, on 23 September 1994, the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the present session.

It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the fiftieth session of the General Assembly.

May I take it, then, that it is the wish of the Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the draft agenda of the fiftieth session?

It was so decided.

The President *(interpretation from French):* This concludes our consideration of agenda item 50.

Agenda item 51

Question of Cyprus

The President *(interpretation from French):* Members may recall that, on 23 September 1994, the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the present session, but deferred a decision on the allocation of the item to an appropriate time during the session.

It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the fiftieth session of the General Assembly.

May I take it, then, that it is the wish of the Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the draft agenda of the fiftieth session?

It was so decided.

The President *(interpretation from French):* This concludes our consideration of agenda item 51.

Agenda item 52

Consequences of the Iraqi occupation of and aggression against Kuwait

The President (*interpretation from French*): Members may recall that, on 23 September 1994, the Assembly decided to include agenda item 52 in the agenda of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly. It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the draft agenda of the fiftieth session?

It was so decided.

Agenda items 127 and 130 (*continued*)

Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission Uganda-Rwanda

Financing of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda

The President (*interpretation from French*): Members may recall that the Assembly adopted resolutions 49/20 A and B, as well as decision 49/481 on these two items.

As Members are aware, the item on the financing of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda has been included in the provisional agenda of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to conclude its consideration of items 127 and 130 at the present session?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 131

Financing of the United Nations Military Liaison Team in Cambodia

The President (*interpretation from French*): Members will recall that the Assembly adopted decision 49/485 on agenda item 131. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to conclude its consideration of this item at the present session?

It was so decided.

Programme of work

The President (*interpretation from French*): I should like to remind delegations that the following agenda items, on which action has been taken at previous meetings, have remained open for consideration during the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

Item 11 Report of the Security Council

Item 34 The situation of democracy and human rights in Haiti

Item 39 The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Item 40 Question of Palestine

Item 43 Restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields

Item 44 Commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations in 1995

Item 77 United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

Item 79 Comprehensive review of the whole question of peace-keeping operations in all their aspects

Item 97 Advancement of women

Item 100 Human rights questions

Item 104 Financial reports and audited financial statements, and reports of the Board of Auditors

Item 107 Programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995

Item 109 Improving the financial situation of the United Nations

Item 112 Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations

Item 116 Financing of the United Nations peace-keeping forces in the Middle East

Item 117 Financing of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission

Item 118 Financing of the activities arising from Security Council resolution 687 (1991)

Item 119 Financing of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara

Item 120 Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador

Item 121 Financing and liquidation of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia

Item 122 Financing of the United Nations Protection Force

Item 123 Financing of the United Nations Operation in Somalia II

Item 124 Financing of the United Nations Operation in Mozambique

Item 125 Financing of the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus

Item 126 Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia

Item 128 Financing of the United Nations Mission in Haiti

Item 129 Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia

Item 146 Financing of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991

Item 162 Financing of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan

Item 163 Financing of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994

As members are aware, these items have been included in the provisional agenda of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly.

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to conclude its consideration of these items at the present session?

It was so decided.

Closing address by the President

The President (*interpretation from French*): As we come to the end of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly, I am moved by two emotions. The first — why not admit it? — is one of pride: the pride of having embodied, in my humble person, so prestigious an institution, in which peoples continue to place their greatest hopes. I have had the opportunity to accept invitations to visit many Member States, and on each of my journeys I was able to confirm the prominent place our Organization holds, not only for political leaders, but also in the concerns of national opinion. I was able to see that the purposes and principles of our Organization continue to be the supreme reference points that they were at the end of the Second World War. Wherever I went — in America, Asia, Europe and at home in Africa — I was able to assess the scope, the currency and the solidity of the founding act of 1945. Through the expressions of sympathy, friendship or even affection that were extended to me, I was always fully aware that what was being honoured, first and foremost, was the Organization on whose behalf I spoke.

This attention has even assumed a special meaning this year as we commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. I can bear solemn witness to the fact that, half a century after the creation of the United Nations, faith in its ideals remains steadfast. This faith has triumphed over all the many tribulations, crises and bloody conflicts experienced by our planet. Peace, social progress, international cooperation, respect for human rights, set down in letters of gold in the United Nations Charter, remain today the governing words of international relations.

I should like to add that, through me, it was the General Assembly — what it represents and symbolizes — that was being hailed. The diversity and richness of the "peoples of the United Nations" set the tone for our Assembly. It is hardly surprising that, throughout these past 50 years, it has been the strongest bulwark of our Organization and that it has been able, at

the most trying moments, to preserve a space for dialogue, without which world peace would certainly have been at greater risk. I have already had the opportunity to discuss the invaluable role played by the General Assembly: it has always been at the crossroads of history, and its tireless action, taken with the hopes of peoples in mind, has allowed it to lend greater weight to the very concept of an international community.

In this period when uncertainty is vying with anxiety, when pernicious destabilizing factors are as numerous as they are pernicious, when doubts sometimes arise about the capacity of the United Nations to lay the foundations of a new international society, the General Assembly is once again in the spotlight. We must therefore live up to what is expected of us.

This leads me to share with the Assembly the second emotion I am experiencing at the end of this forty-ninth session. I must confess to being torn between the certainty that we did our best to carry out the mission conferred upon us and the regret that we were not always able to find solutions to questions affecting both our Organization and the future of the international community. If problems as crucial as those of the reform of the Security Council and the financial situation of the Organization — to mention only two — remain unsolved, it is not for lack of effort on our part. But let there be no misunderstanding: the United Nations will not be able to meet the challenges facing our planet if its structural and financial means do not become better adapted to its fundamental missions. Peace-keeping — and for the moment I shall limit myself to that topic — cannot but seem incomplete if we do not tackle the causes of war. Where poverty takes hold, where frustrations and exclusions accumulate, there is a great likelihood that hatred, which fuels conflicts, will emerge.

After those preliminary comments, I should like to share very bluntly with the Assembly some of my thoughts on the present session, which is now concluding.

First of all, I can say with certainty that the United Nations is more central than ever to international relations.

The general debate at the forty-ninth session once again gave the representatives of Member States the opportunity to express their views on the key topics of our time. While stating their positions — sometimes divergent — on major issues, 45 Heads of State and Government clearly reaffirmed their confidence in the Organization. More than ever the General Assembly is serving as a forum for global discussion, in terms of the number and position of those who address it, on the one hand, and the diversity of the topics considered, or even the range of the 328 resolutions adopted during the forty-ninth session, on the other hand. During this past session, the universality of the Organization was further enhanced with the admission, as the 185th Member State of the United Nations, of the Republic of Palau, the last Trust Territory established by the Charter in 1945. I see this event as an illustration of the role played by the General Assembly in the emancipation of peoples, in accordance with their right to self-determination.

I will not give an exhaustive account of our activities. I will mention only a few of them that bear out the standard-setting mandate that has also been conferred on us.

At its forty-ninth session, the General Assembly adopted three instruments of major legal and political importance: the Declaration on the Enhancement of Cooperation between the United Nations and Regional Arrangements or Agencies in the Maintenance of International Peace and Security; the Declaration on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism; and the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel. Our work was also marked by the entry into force, on 16 November 1994, of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the Agreement of 28 July 1994 on the implementation of Part IX of that Convention. In May 1995, the General Assembly elected the judges of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994.

During the forty-ninth session, I endeavoured to echo the concerns of Member States in seeking the greatest effectiveness of the Organization. In that spirit, in addition to the existing Working Group on the increase in the membership of the Security Council, three new Working Groups were established with mandates to consider, respectively, the financial situation of the Organization; development problems within the framework of the Agenda for Development; and enhancement of the global effectiveness of the United Nations system. These are basic questions, and the responses they receive will determine to a great extent

whether the United Nations achieves its goals for the twenty-first century.

An Open-ended Working Group set up during the forty-eighth session took up the question of restructuring the Security Council. That Group, entrusted with examining the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council, organized its work around two clusters of items: on the one hand, those relating to the composition of the Council, including permanent members, non-permanent members and new categories of members; and, on the other hand, those relating to enhancing the working methods, procedures, effectiveness and productivity of the Council, and its relationship with other United Nations organs.

Substantive discussions were held during the present session, but the questions taken up are so complex that we must continue to consider them if we are to achieve significant results. However, though we are far from full agreement, we now have a better idea of the various positions on key areas of these questions. In any event, I believe that we will eventually need political will on the highest level if we are to be successful in this undertaking.

Along these lines, the Informal Open-ended Working Group on An Agenda for Peace continued its consultations within the context of the four specific sub-groups. Detailed discussions took place within each of these sub-groups and will continue during the next session.

With respect to the Organization's precarious financial situation, to which the Secretary-General drew the General Assembly's attention in his statement dated 12 October 1994, a High-level Open-ended Working Group was set up. I had the honour of presiding over this Group, whose work was guided by the desire to ensure a better financial foundation for the Organization. The measures recommended by the Group, as well as the report of the Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Working Group on the Implementation of the Principle of the Capacity to Pay as the fundamental criterion in determining the scale of assessments for contributions to the regular budget, were submitted to the General Assembly. Since agreement was not reached on many points, the Assembly requested the Working Group to continue its work during the fiftieth session.

With respect more particularly to the need to improve the management of peace-keeping operations, the General Assembly adopted a set of procedures aimed at rationalizing the administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peace-keeping operations.

The General Assembly also continued its consultations on the Agenda for Development. In this connection, an ad hoc open-ended working group was established to formulate proposals that might lead to the final adoption of an action-oriented Agenda for Development. The Working Group made considerable progress, but owing to time constraints was unable to complete its work. That Group also will continue its work during the fiftieth session.

Finally, the General Assembly has just set up a high-level open-ended working group on the strengthening of the United Nations system, whose recommendations will help to enhance the global effectiveness of the Organization.

Generally speaking, our expectations are such that any difficulties experienced by the United Nations lead to deep disappointment, commensurate with the hopes that have been dashed. And then the Organization is accused not of doing too much, as it has been in the past, but rather of not doing enough. This tendency to question the United Nations and to have such high expectations of it is certainly a reflection of the changing global environment. The General Assembly, for instance, which in the past met only on rare occasions between January and September, is now in almost permanent session throughout the year.

Over the past nine months I have presided over, in addition to the meetings of the General Assembly, the work of three working groups — I was of course, supported effectively by the Vice-Presidents — and I undertook consultations for the establishment of a fourth working group. I also made many official visits at the invitation of Governments of Member States.

As can be seen, the presidency of the General Assembly now involves many activities, both at and away from Headquarters. In this respect, it is appropriate to recall General Assembly resolution 46/77 on the institutionalization of the Office of the President of the General Assembly and the support provided to that Office in the carrying out of the President's mandate.

In order for the President of the General Assembly to carry out all these activities, it is essential that this resolution be implemented and that predictable and appropriate budgetary resources be released for that

purpose. It is high time the General Assembly considered this question.

The second thought I wanted to share with the Assembly relates to the need for the renewal of the United Nations. This need is indisputably linked to the new political conditions that in recent years have made it possible for the Security Council to exercise with greater determination than ever its own peace-keeping responsibilities. From 1989-1990 on, the United Nations has made a major commitment to peace-keeping operations and to the establishment of legal, political, economic and social structures for securing peace.

The action of the Security Council, the permanent body of limited membership that acts on behalf of all the States Members of the Organization, has become essential. However, that action must take account of the great diversity of the international community and adapt itself accordingly, because nothing could be more dangerous than the sense that the institution bearing primary responsibility for peace-keeping acts only as an instrument in the service of certain Powers.

No one denies that the Council has exceptional decision-making powers or that it imposes sanctions. However, Security Council action would benefit from enjoying the broadest possible consensus if partiality is to be avoided.

It would not be desirable for the institutional imbalance between the Security Council and the General Assembly of the United Nations to be exacerbated. Such an imbalance would reflect an erroneous interpretation of the Charter, which, while opting for efficiency in the field of peace-keeping, has relinquished none of the competences of the General Assembly, an institution embodying the principle of the sovereign equality of the States Members of the Organization.

I have also reflected on the question of international peace and security. Undeniably, the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons must be noted as a major achievement in assuring international security. We are aware of the decisive role played by the General Assembly in bringing about that agreement, which was concluded on 11 May 1995 in New York.

With respect to hotbeds of tension in general, when the Security Council was paralysed by the use of the veto we observed the General Assembly's vigorous use of its powers emanating from the Charter, in particular Article 11. On many occasions it was involved in peace-keeping activities. Even if the world political situation is different from that which prevailed a few years ago, the General Assembly cannot be excluded from questions having to do with international peace and security. In this field, the work of our Organization must be preventive in nature, an issue that was very close to the heart of former Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld. Preventive diplomacy is one of the fundamental bases of the policy defined by the present Secretary-General in his "An Agenda for Peace". In this context, the General Assembly must have a greater role, and it is desirable that the recommendations of the Assembly's Informal Open-ended Working Group on An Agenda for Peace contribute to the preparation of resolutions for the strengthening of peace.

By reason of its universal composition and the range of viewpoints expressed in it, the General Assembly is the organ in the best position to fulfil the function of conflict prevention. From this standpoint, and without any prejudice to the competences of the Security Council, the Assembly must remain at the heart of the peace-keeping system as an organ for deliberation and prevention.

There is another sphere in which the role of the Assembly is essential, namely that of fact-finding, which is so important in the quest for solutions or conflict prevention. Here, again, the work of the Assembly can reinforce and complement that of the Security Council with a view to greater effectiveness.

I have also considered the problems of the financing of the Organization and of its actions for peace. As we all know, this question is vital for the future of the Organization and therefore to the maintenance of peace.

The financial situation of the United Nations is one of grave crisis. The Secretary-General addressed the General Assembly on this subject on 12 October 1994, but he had also sounded the alarm on the financial picture on 22 June, before the High-level Open-ended Working Group on the Financial Situation of the Organization.

The crisis is due, above all, to the fact that Member States do not pay in full and on time their financial contributions to the various budgets of the Organization.

As of 10 August 1995, the unpaid balance of contributions amounted to $3.9 billion, of which $858.2

million corresponded to the regular budget and $3 billion to the budget for peace-keeping operations. Obviously, this situation affects the functioning and the effectiveness of the United Nations in all fields, especially that of peace-keeping.

In the course of this session the General Assembly has reaffirmed the need to comply with Article 17 of the Charter, under which the financing of peace-keeping operations is the collective responsibility of all Member States. In "An Agenda for Peace", the Secretary-General made some proposals concerning this issue, and some of them have been adopted by the General Assembly and implemented. What is really called for is that we should reflect on the matter together. More than ever before, the General Assembly must take the initiatives required in such a situation in order to free the Organization from the financial uncertainties now affecting it and to free it also from the control exercised in this area by certain Member States. In this regard, the boldest of measures should be envisaged to provide the Organization with appropriate and predictable resources. These solutions must in any event take into account the capacity of Member States to pay.

The relationship between the United Nations and the regional organizations was of particular interest to me.

This seems to me to be one of the most important questions for the future of international relations. The maintenance of peace calls for the implementation of the provisions of Chapter VIII of the Charter. The Security Council attaches great importance to the role of regional arrangements and organizations, and it considers it indispensable that their efforts be coordinated with those of the United Nations. In its resolution 47/71 *(para. 52)* the General Assembly expressly encouraged regional and subregional organizations to cooperate with the United Nations, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter.

The role of the General Assembly is therefore vital. Because of its universal composition, it is the venue *par excellence* for debating problems of regional security with a view to seeking viable solutions aimed at the establishment of lasting regional peace, which is a prerequisite for any form of development.

I have also reflected on the relationship between the United Nations and world public opinion, and I have arrived at the conviction that the General Assembly must be the interpreter of international public opinion.

For 50 years now, the General Assembly has been echoing international public opinion by contributing, through its many resolutions and conventions, to a significant evolution of positive international law.

The role of the General Assembly has also contributed to the international community's heightened awareness of problems related to economic and social development.

One major innovation of the General Assembly along these lines is the holding of large world conferences. These conferences make it possible for broader debate to take place, and they generate concrete programmes of action. Dealing with issues from human rights in general to the specific situation of women, from sustainable development to the prevention of natural disasters, from population problems to those of the environment and from habitats to social development, they endeavour to reflect mankind's aspirations for greater well-being. The participation of non-governmental organizations in these conferences and the ever greater mobilization of public opinion to which they lead are to be commended.

We welcome the considerable progress achieved at Beijing on the long road towards the advancement of women.

I want again to stress the decisive role of the General Assembly in all these conferences.

I turn now to my own continent, Africa. At its substantive session, held at Geneva this summer, the Economic and Social Council focused its high-level debate on the development of Africa. It recalled the relevance and timeliness of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, along with the necessary framework of partnership between Africa and the international community, within which the objectives of the New Agenda should be attained. Unfortunately, we must note that, in the context of a globalized economy, Africa, despite courageous reform and considerable national efforts at adjustment, remains a marginalized continent with no real share in the overall growth of the world economy.

Indeed, the simplified image of Africa too often seen in the international media does not reflect the revolution — let us not be afraid of a word — in which Africa is engaged. In the face of growing economic and social difficulties, our States are resolutely undertaking

reforms aimed at improving our economies and at restoring basic economic balance. We are also promoting the State of law and the rules of democracy. The success of such undertakings depends on the support of our peoples. No reform whatsoever can succeed without the prior consent of the peoples concerned. I must recall that our peoples have suffered from the effects of the austerity policies imposed by international financial institutions. But we must be careful not to cross the threshold of the unbearable; not to rend social cohesion and reduce the ability of African States to maintain it. There are tragic examples of the consequences of such a situation.

The courageous efforts being made in Africa must be supported by more sustained action by industrialized countries. We must move from rhetoric to action, from declarations of intention to implementation. More than ever before, the adoption of an agenda for development must mark an opportunity to put the United Nations back at the centre of international activities for economic and social development.

The United Nations must therefore have the resources needed to promote world peace, both in terms of the diplomatic and military operations necessary to ensure the security of individuals and peoples, and in terms of development operations for the greater well-being of all mankind. Only concerted action can enable us and future generations to live in peace. To tackle global problems that have no borders and that threaten our individual and collective existence, solidarity among peoples is more necessary than ever before. Suffice it to mention problems related to drugs, to the deterioration of the environment, to the misuse of rare and non-renewable resources, to acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) and to poverty.

The United Nations has an essential role to play on all these fronts. While it is true that we must demand of the Organization greater effectiveness and better coordination of its efforts, we must also give it the means to implement all the resolutions we adopt and to realize the hopes we place in it.

If we fail to back all our statements with adequate means, the Organization can only fall short of our peoples' expectations. This is a risk we cannot and do not wish to run, for all of us who for years have been observing the development of mankind know that preventive diplomacy and development assistance are far less costly than conflict and war. We also know that combating poverty in all its forms is the most certain way of promoting peace on Earth, of facilitating trade and of combating the other global problems I have just set out.

We also know full well that all States without exception are facing considerable budgetary problems. The temptation is great to reduce the share of these budgets devoted to United Nations peace and development operations; we understand this. But in a time of hardship we must be all the more careful about our decisions on the allocation of resources. We must ensure that economizing today does not lead to greater expenditures in the future. Sustained and proper financing of United Nations activities, accompanied by controls of quality and effectiveness to be sure, is a vital investment in the future of us all. Not to accomplish this because of short-term budgetary constraints would jeopardize long-term global development prospects. In each of our countries and collectively, we must reexamine the contribution and the effectiveness of the United Nations. I am convinced that this would enable us to better understand why the United Nations must enjoy the continued and increased support of the international community.

Before concluding I want to thank everyone who has joined me in the inspiring task I have completed.

I dedicate my final thoughts as President of the General Assembly to my country, Côte d'Ivoire, which I have endeavoured to represent with dignity and to the best of my moral and professional ability. I have always viewed my election as a tribute, not to me personally, but to my homeland and to the courageous and pragmatic policy incarnated in the father of the Ivoirian nation, President Félix Houphouët-Boigny. This policy is today continued with unswerving determination and faith by his worthy successor, President Henri Konan Bédié. President Henri Konan Bédié is today leading Côte d'Ivoire towards its great destiny through concrete economic and social achievements and through the consolidation of a democratic system which gives priority to full respect for human rights and for the dignity and civil liberties of all Ivoirians.

I also thank the African Heads of State for their constant support, and to the Organization of African Unity and to the Group of African States at the United Nations for their readiness at all times to help. I thank the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77 for their inestimable cooperation. My thanks go also to all the other regional groups at the United Nations, which in a gratifying way extended to me their friendship and

constructive cooperation in the search for solutions to the many problems we faced. All this enabled me to carry out my responsibilities as fully as possible and in the best of conditions.

Let me now convey my sincere thanks to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, a brother African whose support has been unfailing.

I also thank the Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly and all the other Assembly officers, as well as the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the Main Committees and the various working groups, who unfailingly assisted me and helped me accomplish my task. My thanks go also to the Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Alvaro de Soto, and his colleagues in the Division of General Assembly Affairs, and to the multitude of Secretariat staff members, seen and unseen, such as conference officers, editors, interpreters, translators, secretaries, typists, security staff, messengers, maintenance staff and those with the delicate and highly appreciated task of daily adorning our General Assembly offices with flowers. All helped us, at their respective levels, by carrying out their tasks with professionalism and dedication.

Minute of silent prayer or meditation

The President (*interpretation from French*): As the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly comes to an end, I invite representatives to stand and observe a minute of silent prayer or meditation.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silent prayer or meditation.

Closure of the forty-ninth session

The President (*interpretation from French*): I declare closed the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.